

Christianity and Crisis

A Bi-Weekly Journal of Christian Opinion

VOL. XIV, No. 14

AUGUST 9, 1954

\$2.50 per year; 10 cents per copy

PUBLIC LIBRARY

DETROIT

The Communist Threat in South Africa

RECENT dispatches from the Union of South Africa cast an illuminating sidelight on the struggle between communism and its alternatives in the contemporary world. South Africa is by no means a microcosm of the larger world, but it is illustrative of certain important facets of the planetary upheaval.

The dispatches indicate that the leadership of the rather inchoate movements of African protest is passing rapidly into the hands of communists. A new movement, the Congress of the People, is forging to the front as the chief vehicle of articulate non-European opinion, and it bears the familiar marks of the old communist "united front." Of great import, this new movement is multi-racial (but chiefly non-European) in character, and much of its leadership is drawn from younger Indian communists.

The principal protest movement for Africans heretofore has been the African National Congress, composed almost solely of Africans and led by moderate, generally Christian spokesmen, as symbolized in its present president, Chief Luthuli, and Professor Z. K. Matthews. The campaign of passive resistance against new proposals of the Malan government two years ago was under the quiet and disciplined direction of the African National Congress; after its collapse at the end of 1952, the communists, who had been nibbling at the African National Congress for years, set up the new Congress of the People and have outflanked the older agency. Without a clear plan of its own and without any real support from the European community, the moderate movement is now rapidly becoming a satellite of the newer communist front.

The communist strategem is realistic in drawing the line between Europeans and non-Europeans. That is precisely the point at which it is drawn by the policies of the Malan government, and an effective opposition must recognize the fact. While the Indian Congress and the African National Congress may articulate peculiar aspirations of their respective ethnic groups, the fundamental political question in South Africa today is not whether a pluralistic

society can be built, despite the mythologies of the Malan government to that effect. When it is legislating rather than speculating, the government draws a sharp line between European and non-European, and an effective opposition must join the issue on those terms.

By the same token, the various gestures by men of great good-will are not likely to be very effective in a situation increasingly prone to violence. The Liberal Party, led by outstanding whites like Margaret Ballinger (a member of Parliament) and Alan Paton, is also multi-racial in character and purpose, in that it draws no racial line at all. It thereby becomes a gallant gesture, and a foretoken of an ultimate day, in Africa and the world, when politics may reflect racial equality and Christian ideals more accurately. The immediate political reality was reflected in the recent Western Cape native elections, when the votes went to the communist candidate for the third successive time.

Five years ago articulate Africans could report that the communists were making little headway in South Africa. An observer with any competence in analysis of communist tactics could suspect that the country was ripe for communist infiltration at that time. Developments of the last five years have only increased the communist opportunity.

Policies of the Malan government have been of considerable import—perhaps the crucial factors—in these developments. Harsh restrictive measures directed at non-European groups, in the name of "ethnic fulfilment" for all groups, have aroused general bitterness and driven non-Europeans toward a "united front" ethnically. A political form to demonstrate this fact is now emerging. The government has virtually unlimited powers for dealing with "communists"—and the term itself is very broadly defined—or mass demonstrations. But it is likely to learn that non-European resentment is not alleviated by further oppression, and that ideas—even false Marxist ideas—cannot be eradicated by the police alone.

The situation in South Africa is unbelievably complicated, and developments there must be seen in perspective. Millions of Africans are not yet ready for modern political leadership of any kind. But there are parallels to this fact in certain Asian countries where open conflict under communist impetus has already occurred. Probably the communists in South Africa will not venture open revolt in the immediate future, except for occasional provocative incidents. They are more dangerous while working underground: the attitudes and loyalties of all non-Europeans have been largely relegated to that hidden level, and the future of South Africa may be determined there more largely than in Parliament.

In short, ominous developments in South Africa support the often-expressed, seldom-heeded view that communism tends to thrive in situations where wide-spread resentment can find no other outlet that promises to be effective. Whenever a party in power refuses to reckon with moderate leadership in opposition to its policies, it helps to create revolutionary leadership. Whenever it drives all effective

opposition underground, it creates its own would-be grave-diggers.

The fact that the present government of the Union of South Africa is nominally the most Christian in the world, with a large number of ordained clergymen in high public positions, is an ironic aspect of the total picture. World Christianity certainly would not approve the racial policies of that government. But sooner or later the communists are likely to exploit the identification of religion with oppression. Here again, the alignments in South Africa seem almost ready-made for the communist ideology.

It may be that recent dispatches from the Union of South Africa are unduly alarmist. Certainly there is little evidence that the country is on the verge of open revolt or civil war. But it is notorious that the communists have used essentially similar methods, with minor local variations, in the infiltration of country after country. The success or failure of South Africa in meeting their challenge is of importance to the entire world.

L. P.

The Church Will Be Challenged at Evanston

BENJAMIN E. MAYS

FOR a long time people who believed in segregation in Church and secular life could find support for their prejudice by relying on science. They could quote anthropologists, biologists, psychologists and other social scientists to the effect that certain racial groups were inferior. Forty years ago, certainly fifty, most scientists who wrote on the subject of race said that there were inherently superior and inferior races. So if a churchman wanted to find support for his prejudicial views he stood on the "solid rock" of science. But this is not so today. There is not one great scientist who would talk dogmatically today about superior and inferior races. Science agrees that whatever differences we find among races are due to environmental and not to biological causes. Science asserts that there are superior and inferior individuals but no superior and inferior races. There are great minds in all races and dull minds in all races. In fact, science says in essence that there is only one race, and that is the human race. This fact, which ecumenical bodies in previous years have echoed, will again be reiterated at Evanston by the Commission on the Church Amid Racial and Ethnic Tensions. One argument for a segregated Church—that of inferior races—cannot be used today by intelligent people.

For many years people justified their prejudice and their racially segregated Churches, in this country and in South Africa, on the ground that God made the races different; and that was proof enough that God intended for the races to be separated even in God's house. These people justified the segregated Church by an appeal to scripture. They searched the Old and New Testaments for proof that a segregated Church is biblical and God's will. They saw in the Old Testament how the Jews fought against the mingling of their people with nations and races that served other gods and imbibed a culture different from theirs. But those who sought to justify racial Churches on biblical grounds were not thorough scholars. They did not see, or did not want to see, that the basis of Jewish exclusiveness was religious and cultural, not racial. They were blind to the fact that the Jewish people were not a pure people and that they were related by blood to many of the nations around them. Even though of the same racial stock, these people—except those who embraced the Jewish faith—were not accepted by the Jews. It is vain and futile for anyone to seek justification in the Old Testament for a segregated Church based on race, culture, or ethnic origins. Let me give one illustration to show that the basis of separation was religious and not racial.

When Moses exhorted the Jews not to inter-marry with the people in the land they were to possess, he did so on neither racial nor ethnic grounds. In Deuteronomy 7:2-4 this fact is so clear that he who thinks at all understands it: "When the Lord your God gives them over to you, and you defeat them; then you must utterly destroy them; you shall make no covenant with them and show no mercy to them. You shall not make marriage with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons. For they would turn away your sons from following me, to serve other gods; then the anger of the Lord would be kindled against you, and he would destroy you quickly." (RSV)

Those who have tried to support their prejudice by the story of Ham forgot that Noah placed the curse not on Ham but on Ham's son Canaan, and the descendants of Canaan were not spread over Africa. They forgot, too, that Noah was drunk when he cursed Canaan. Surely no great weight should be placed on the words of a drunken man. We might do well to read again the ninth chapter of Genesis on this point.

When those who seek biblical grounds for their prejudice turn to the New Testament, they find even less support there than they found in the Old Testament. No sane man has ever denied the fact that the Gospel of Christ is super-racial, super-cultural, super-national and super-class. Christ died for all mankind and fraternized freely with people other than Jews.

Peter and Paul, and especially Paul, saw clearly that the Gospel of Christ superseded the law. In fact, if Christianity had been confined to Jews and those who came in through circumcision, the Religion of Jesus would have died in the first century. Peter was quick to apprehend "that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him." (Acts 10:35, RSV) Paul sounded the universal character of the Gospel when he proclaimed: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3:28, RSV) At Evanston the Commission on the Church Amid Racial and Ethnic Tensions will show that if we turn to science for shelter for our racial segregation in God's house, we will seek in vain; and that the search will be equally futile if we try to find a basis for it in the Bible.

There are two other places for the racist to hunt in his effort to find support for justifying segregation in God's Church. He can turn to the practices of the early Church. But when he does, he will find no support for it. Pentecost, when Peter added 3,000 souls to the Christian community, is the clearest example to be found anywhere that all nations, races, and tongues were together. We are

told in Acts 2:1 that "when the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place." (RSV) They were there: Parthians, Medes and Elamites; dwellers in Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, in Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt and the part of Libya about Cyrene; strangers from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians. The Church Fathers sustain the position that in the early centuries discrimination on the basis of race was unknown and unheard of in God's Church. Tertullian, Origen, Ignatius, Hermas, Barnabas, Clement, and others sustain the argument that race was not a factor in the early Church. Later scholars, Harnack, Ramsey, Cadoux, Moffatt, Griffith, and Latourette, support the view that the Church of the middle ages was equally free of segregation and discrimination based on race. Color and race prejudice are modern practices and developed in modern times, in the latter part of the seventeenth century and in the eighteenth century. They developed when the explorers of Europe began their economic exploitation of the colored peoples of Africa, Asia, and America. The exploited colored people were soon branded as inferior and were segregated—a justification for exploiting them. In the light of these facts, which are well known to religious scholars, the Church will be challenged at Evanston as never before. Secular bodies like the United Nations speak eloquently against all forms of segregation and discrimination based on race. On May 17, 1954 another "secular" body, the United States Supreme Court, declared segregation in the public schools unconstitutional. Segregation *per se* is discriminatory and unequal. What can the Churches do? What will they do?

The major problem confronting the Churches at Evanston, therefore, will not be to show from the Bible and Church history that it is only in modern times that race became a basis for Church membership. Honest scholarship has proved this fact to all honest minds. The main issue will be to show how the Gospel of Christ can be presented and lived so as to make new creatures of men and women in the area of race.

We have known for centuries what the Bible says about race. We have known for a long time that the early Church and the Church of the middle ages did not segregate on the basis of race and ethnic origins. We know that there is no scientific basis for treating one group as inferior and another as superior. The unadulterated Gospel on race has been preached for nineteen centuries. One world conference after another has condemned racial separation in the Church. Yet segregation is the great scandal in the Church, especially in the United States and South Africa. We have plenty of light on the subject, but like Pilate of old we lack the power to act on the light we have. As Goodspeed translated John 1:5,

"The light is still shining in the darkness, for the darkness has never put it out." The problem at Evanston will be: how to dispel the darkness which exists amidst racial and ethnic tensions.

There is no doubting the fact that the Church is a highly segregated institution in many areas of the world. At Evanston the Church will want to know how to deal with race within its own membership. The question will be: how can the Church so exemplify the spirit of Christ in Christian fellowship that the world will be compelled to follow its example?

At this Assembly the people will want to know if the Church has any responsibility for the alleviation of racial injustice in social, political, and economic life. What is the Church's responsibility as an organized group, and what is the responsibility of the individual Christian? If the organized Church has a responsibility, what is it? What is the Church's duty in assisting the individual to fulfill his Christian task in his daily vocation? Above all, we should ask ourselves if there can be a Pentecost as of old. If so, how?

If there can be a Pentecost in 1954, the individual Christian will be receptive to the Gospel, and he will act as a true Christian if he believes the Gospel.

There is no dichotomy between belief and action. We act on what we really believe. The true believer, like Peter, Paul, and Jesus, will not be bound by his environment, but he will testify to the unity in Christ by his daily acts. If there can be a modern Pentecost, the Church will do likewise in its worship and membership practices and will encourage its members to exemplify this unity in Christ through their vocations. Being thus convicted, all Christians present at Evanston will take appropriate steps in their respective congregations to make it possible for the will of God to become operative among the races, to the end that all Church doors will be opened in membership and worship to all who serve the Lord in sincerity and in truth.

I make bold to assert that the American Church must do at least one thing. It must open its doors to all peoples, irrespective of race. This means not only for worship but for membership as well. The American Church cannot tell the various boards of education to obey the Supreme Court, while at the same time it denies worship and membership to men for no other reason than that they are colored or belong to a certain designated race. If the Churches needed a *legal* basis for doing what the *Gospel* has ordered for nineteen centuries they have it in the recent decision of the Supreme Court.

The Theme of Evanston

REINHOLD NIEBUHR

(This article is reprinted by request, with minor editorial revisions, from RELIGION IN LIFE, Vol. XXIII, No. 3, 1954, where it originally appeared as a comment on an accompanying article by Kenneth Scott Latourette, "'Christ the Hope of the World': What Has History to Say?" We are grateful to RELIGION IN LIFE for permission to reprint Dr. Niebuhr's essay.)

IT is significant for the chasm which separates America from the Continent that so eminent a Christian historian as Professor Latourette should interpret the theme of the Second General Assembly of the World Council of Churches, to be held in Evanston this summer, as implying that Jesus Christ is the "hope of the world" in the sense that the Christian faith offers the world some hope of a gradual triumph, in actual human history, of the "values" embodied in Christ.

For the continental theologians, who were chiefly responsible for formulating the theme, chose it, I am persuaded, because they thought it most strategic to challenge precisely this form of historical optimism. They regard such a hope as a form of secularism, and they replace it with a biblical account of Christ's second coming—which in America will be regarded as a purely illusory projection of hope to the "end of history," which cultured Christians had left to literalistic sects to claim as their article of faith. The average intelligent Protestant Christian will interpret the phrase "Jesus Christ the only hope

of the world" in exactly the same way as the distinguished historian has interpreted it.

I think this whole misunderstanding proves that the definition of Christian hope is not the best way of consolidating an ecumenical consensus or of challenging the remnants of "secularism" which the Continent suspects in the Christian thought of the "Anglo-Saxon" world. The "secular" element in Christian thought, particularly in America, is of course the identification of Christian hope with the idea of progress.

Professor Latourette assumes it to be his function to interpret Christian hope in this way. But he is also an honest historian and he therefore has great difficulty in fulfilling his assignment. Thus he calls attention to the spread of Christianity from the Western world to the entire globe; but he is forced to concede that this phenomenon is balanced by the secularization of Western Christendom and that a part of this secularization includes the emergence of the demonic secular religion of Communism. He also faithfully records that the dynamic of Western

civilization is the fruit of Christianity's affirmation of man's historic existence, but that this dynamic has both evil and good fruits. This latter admission contains the refutation of any simple identification of Christian hope with the idea of historical progress. It is very plain that human history is open to endless possibilities of both good and evil, because human freedom is radical and real. There is therefore the possibility that any historic development of human freedom will result in both destructiveness and increased creativity.

In the report of the World Council Advisory Commission on the central theme, this character of human history is described in the following words:

The long history of the world which He created and sustains from day to day and for the sake of which He sent His Son, is not rendered meaningless by the coming of His Kingdom. Nor on the other hand is His Kingdom simply the final outcome of the world's history. There is no straight line from the labors of men to His Kingdom. He rejects that history of which man fancies himself to be the center, creator and lord. He accepts that history of which the beginning, middle and end He Himself fixes.

In short, the theme of the General Assembly elaborates a New Testament hope according to which the culmination of history is not within history itself but at its end. History is recognized as being problematic to the end. It solves no human problems but rather accentuates every human problem.

Therefore from the standpoint from which the Christian hope has been defined by the Advisory Commission, some of the evidence adduced by Professor Latourette is rather irrelevant: that Christian influence entered the formation of the League of Nations, that it was powerful in the organization of the Red Cross, that the Salvation Army responded to the needs of the poor who were driven to revolt by Marxist dogmas, that it was responsible for the abolition of slavery and for the organization of YMCAs. Some of these assertions are highly problematic, incidentally. Wilson may have been a Christian, but the dream of a world community which brought forth the League of Nations is a Renaissance, rather than a specifically Christian, achievement. However great may be achievements of the Salvation Army, they do not seriously challenge or abate the evils of world-wide communism. In most of the achievements which the historian enumerates, secular idealism co-operated with more distinctively Christian idealism in bringing them about. This is true of the abolition movement and of the growth of political democracy. One therefore feels it a little pretentious to assert that "It is through lives made radiant through Christ that these movements begin."

One must be even more hesitant to affirm with Professor Latourette that "judged from the scope of the entire human scene and the course of history

to our day, Christ and his Church are making themselves more and more felt and have never been more potent than in our time." Perhaps it is the phrase "Christ and his Church" which makes the assertion so dubious. We are convinced that the Sovereign Lord of history has been supremely revealed in Christ. We can detect proofs of this Lord's sovereignty in the whole course of history, particularly when we see him making the wrath of man to praise him; and when we see movements not specifically Christian and far beyond the confines of the church, serving providentially to do God's will. But this vision of a divine Lord is obscured when we say "Christ and his Church" and particularly when we make the claim that the two, "Christ and his Church," are becoming increasingly potent in our day. The claim that the Church is becoming increasingly potent in our day is certainly open to doubt. But it is even more dubious to link "Christ and his Church" in this way. For thus we make the glory of Christ dependent upon the weak human instrument of the Church.

Let us take just one example from current history: the struggle with communism, and previously with fascism. In each of these struggles some Protestant and Catholic Christians bore heroic witness to their faith, but the total Christian witness was ambiguous. The Catholic Church, which resisted Nazism in the end, first made compromises with it because it saw it as a foe of communism. It resisted communism more unequivocally. But it was also involved in the decadent feudalism, of Eastern Europe for instance, the injustices of which furnished the resentments upon which communism fed. Protestant Christianity had its own heroes of resistance to both fascism and communism. But it contributed by its indifference to political and economic justice to the rise of both; and it was, and is tainted by communist sympathies.

The self-destruction of these two demonic movements is therefore a manifestation of the sovereignty of God over history which is greater than anything suggested by the phrase "Christ and his Church." For the Church is deeply involved in the sins of the world; and never more so than when it pretends to divine sanctity, as in the case of Catholicism. One suspects, in fact, that the phrase "Christ and his Church" hides the heresy which the Advisory Commission wanted to warn against by distinguishing between the divine sovereignty and the history conceived in terms of human virtues and human powers. The point is that the divine sovereignty expresses itself not chiefly by the aid of human virtues and powers but despite human weaknesses; and it uses all kinds of instruments for its purpose, including the virtues of non-Christians and the self-defeat of the sins of men.

II

This does not mean that the conscious effort to do God's will is irrelevant or that the Church, as that community where the mystery of the divine sovereignty is disclosed, does not play a significant part in God's designs. Most of the illustrations which Latourette uses are in fact excellent examples of the working of Christ's spirit in the affairs of men. They only become absurd when it is implied that the triumph of Christ depends upon them. For not only are the historical fruits of Christian men and of the Church continually ambiguous, but the effects in history of those who do not consciously follow God's will are very important. The design which the Bible discerns in God's sovereignty over history is in every case more majestic than can be seen if we try to isolate Christian virtues and attribute certain types of moral progress to them.

Most of the examples which Professor Latourette gives of men and women who incarnated the spirit of Christ, and particularly his emphasis upon humble men and women whose lives cannot be obviously fitted into some grand pattern of history but who are nevertheless significant in the eyes of faith, call attention to the fact that the witness of faith, and of love as a fruit of faith, is more important than the witness of hope.

The situation seems to be that the Christian faith affirms that the drama of each individual life and of the whole human enterprise is played on a larger stage than the one-dimensional nature-history which the historians chart. It is declared to be under a higher sovereignty than the system of nature and of reason which scientists and philosophers discern. The only real but important proof of such an affirmation is that the human self transcends all the sovereignties which are known, and that life does not make any sense if it is measured in the dimension of the "wisdom of the world." We are either driven to despair by its meaninglessness or to various types of madness by trying to make sense out of it from our own standpoint. The madness is the consequence of our grasping for power or prestige or wisdom beyond the obvious limits of creatures. The alternative is to discern by faith the higher dimension and to be assured that "neither life nor death nor any other creature is able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

A concomitant of the faith that Christ is a clue to the mystery of the divine sovereign of human life and history is that human life transcends our earthly existence. There is no witness for such a faith and such a hope except the nonchalance of perfect faith and love, which is able to say "whether we live we live unto the Lord, whether we die we die unto the Lord, whether we live therefore or die we are the Lord's." This nonchalance is a perfect wit-

ness to the faith only if it results in an actual mitigation of the lust for power and prestige by which the faithless people try to make sense out of life.

But such a faith leaves the question unanswered how the whole human enterprise will come to a conclusion. The New Testament eschatology assumes that human history will be fragmentary and contradictory to the end, that the worst form of evil, the "anti-Christ," will appear at the end of history; and that the final victory of Christ will therefore come not in history but at the end of history. This assumes that the moral ambiguities of history and its contradictions will not be mitigated. They may even be heightened. The New Testament eschatology assumes that they will be heightened. "In the last days" many evils will appear. Men will be "proud, boasters, lovers of themselves." This eschatology seemed highly speculative; and since the Renaissance it has also seemed irrelevant because another way was found to give history meaning. The meaning was furnished by the development of all good things in history. The Christian faith did not relinquish its faith in personal immortality, but it substituted the modern idea of progress for this eschatology of the New Testament.

The choice of the World Council theme is an effort to recall the Church to the hope as expressed in the New Testament. In a sense this is an appropriate era in which to make the attempt. For the substitute faith which seemed so plausible in the nineteenth century is rather fantastic now in an age of probable atomic wars and of global conflicts instead of the hoped-for global peace. Professor Latourette, as a good historian, allows the evidence for this nature of history to appear in his analysis, though he clings to the old faith by his insistence that "Christ and his Church" are becoming progressively more influential. We are living in an age in which the modern substitute for Christian eschatology, which was once so plausible, has become more fantastic than the Christian hope of the parousia of Christ.

III

I would maintain nevertheless that the selection of eschatology was faulty statesmanship, if it was the concern of the Church to bear witness to its faith before the world. The New Testament eschatology is at once too naïve for a sophisticated world and too sophisticated for the simple-minded modern man, who has become so accustomed to try to make sense out of life by measuring history in terms of some scheme of rational intelligibility. It is just as foolish to bear witness to our faith by insisting on what will seem to the world a fantastic hope as to bear witness to our faith by our personal hope of "the resurrection." These two hopes are indeed an integral part of the faith. But we might not in the

hour of death be perfectly certain of our destiny after death and we might, despite these doubts, have given a genuine witness of our faith, if we had borne pain and sorrow with patience and had been released from self-concern so that our hearts went out to our brethren.

While the present seems a very strategic era in which to restore a part of the New Testament faith which had become discredited and obscured, we need only to analyze the needs of our generation to recognize that it is not particularly redemptive to approach a disillusioned generation with a proud "I told you so" and a fanciful picture of the end of history, or at least a picture which will seem fanciful to our generation, whether Christian or secular. What would be more to the point is to bear witness to our faith in terms of attitudes of watchfulness and soberness rather than the alternate moods of "sleep and drunkenness" which St. Paul describes as the moods of "the night," that is, as the consequences of the lack of faith in the Lord of history who has been revealed to us in Christ.

Our generation has these moods of sleep and drunkenness, of complacency and hysteria, not only alternately but simultaneously; for we are curiously hysterical about communism but complacent about the possibilities of an atomic war. The poor Civil Defense Administrator has difficulty in getting anyone to man the civil defense, and he rightly surmises the dangers of atomic destruction are so monstrous that the imagination either refuses to comprehend them or is incapable of doing so. Yet these dangers are no more than the most vivid expressions of the peril of death which we have always faced, and which our generation by some legerdemain has sought to banish from the imagination.

To "watch and be sober" means that, armed by our faith, we will not be surprised by any evil which appears in history; and in our surprise we will not seek escape into either complacency or hysteria. Such a genuine Christian nonchalance might actually help our civilization to survive; since its dangers are actually increased by complacency on the one hand and by hysteria on the other.

But the final paradox of faith is that the Christian faith and hope will be most creative if we are not too preoccupied with its current relevance and pragmatic efficiency. In that sense the contemporary preoccupation of our culture with history has made it less effective in historical action than it ought to be. This is an ironic refutation of the secular humanism which believed that if only it disavowed the transhistorical interests of the Christian faith and centered the attention of man upon historical goals, it could establish a heaven upon earth. This heaven on earth turned out in the case of orthodox Marxism to be a communist hell. In the case of liberal utopianism it has degenerated into the far

less dangerous but equally pathetic hopes for a "scientific" management of human affairs, which would in time eliminate human "aggressiveness" and establish some kind of human consensus through the "common faith" of all right-minded and "enlightened" people.

These modern faiths were fantastic enough and they have suffered tragic refutation. But they must be answered by a faith which does not place its main emphasis upon a hope which will seem equally fantastic, but upon a life of soberness and watchfulness, of faith and of love—which will appeal to a world in the night of despair as having some gleams of light in it, derived from the "Light that shineth in darkness."

CHURCH NEWS AND NOTES

Tillich and Greene Interpret Religious Art at Evanston

The World Council of Churches in sponsoring an exhibit of religious art at the Chicago Art Institute in connection with its Second Assembly is attempting to indicate through the artistic media that the Christian faith and the Christian Church are universal.

The exhibit is composed of thirty paintings from museums and private collections in Europe and America. It spans the centuries from the 13th century to the present day. Included are examples of both explicit and implicit religious art.

Prof. Paul Tillich of Union Theological Seminary and Prof. Theodore M. Greene of Yale University in a preface to the catalogue entitled "Authentic Religious Art" explain that art is implicitly religious "if it expresses, in whatever fashion, the artist's sensitive and honest search for ultimate meaning in terms of his own contemporary culture. If *religious* be defined as man's *ultimate concern for Ultimate Reality*, all art which reflects, however partially and distortedly, this ultimate concern is at least implicitly religious, even if it makes no use whatever of a recognizable religious subject-matter or any traditional religious symbols.

"Authentic art is explicitly religious if it expresses the artist's sensitive and honest search for ultimate meaning and significance with the aid of a recognizable religious subject-matter or religious symbols. . . . In the Christian tradition, all Biblical material and such symbols as the Cross are religious in this sense. The mere use of such material does not, of course, guarantee either artistic integrity or significant religious expressiveness. Indeed, much so-called religious art today is totally lacking in both artistic and religious value, despite its use of traditional religious subject-matter and symbolism. It lacks artistic vitality and is therefore inexpressive; it is therefore necessarily devoid of significant religious content or meaning."

The religious art exhibit is on display at the Art Institute of Chicago from July 15 through August 31.

Some may wonder at the inclusion of several modern artists in the exhibit, such as Marc Chagall, Andre Derain, Georges Rouault and Rico Lebrun. Professors Tillich and Greene reassure them as follows: "The

Christianity and Crisis

A Bi-Weekly Journal of Christian Opinion
537 West 121st St., New York 27, N. Y.

EDITORIAL BOARD

REINHOLD NIEBUHR and JOHN C. BENNETT
Co-Chairmen

M. SEARLE BATES	LISTON POPE
ROBERT McAFEE BROWN	WILLIAM SCARLETT
F. ERNEST JOHNSON	HENRY P. VAN DUSEN
AMOS N. WILDER	

ARNOLD W. HEARN, *Secretary*

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

JAMES C. BAKER	HENRY SMITH LEIPER
HENRY SLOANE COFFIN	JOHN A. MACKAY
CHARLES W. GILKEY	FRANCIS P. MILLER
LYNN HAROLD HOUGH	EDWARD L. PARSONS
UMPHREY LEE	

great religious art of the past is bound to be more intelligible and acceptable to us because we are familiar with it. Contemporary religious art which is dynamic and path-finding is difficult for us to comprehend because it speaks to us in an unfamiliar style, and it is deeply disturbing because it is so often anguished and violent. This is, however, inevitable because each age must develop its own style and idiom and because our times are times of violence and anguish, anxiety and despair.

"It is not strange that our most sensitive and creative artists should so poignantly express this cultural distress in such baffling ways; nor is it surprising that they should so seldom express a triumphant faith or *the peace that passeth all understanding*. In an age of spiritual turmoil and anxiety, when all spiritual affirmations are difficult and rare, they have at least had the courage and the artistic integrity not to retreat into an empty formalism, or a traditionalistic conventionalism, or a dishonest saccharine prettiness. This courage of theirs may well be prophetic of a new religiously oriented cultural vitality which, we can hope, is slowly and painfully coming into being in our day."

Detroit Public Library
Book Receiving Dept.
5201 Woodward Ave.
Detroit 2, Mich.

27462 11-54

Bishop Berggrav Urges Joint Communion at Evanston

Oslo (RNS)—Joint Communion services at the Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches were urged here by Bishop Eivind Berggrav, former Primate of the Church of Norway. The Assembly will be held in Evanston, Ill., August 15-31.

Bishop Berggrav's views on the controversial subject were contained in an article in the Norwegian monthly, "Kirke og Kultur" (Church and Culture), of which he is editor.

The Lutheran churchman, who is now in the United States, said it is "intolerable that we should stress our unity in Christ and then go each our own way when Christ invites us to take part in His perfect fellowship."

He said the Churches have now "talked so long about what unites us and what divides us, that if we are to get any further we must take a step." That step, he stressed, "must be to the same Communion table."

Bishop Berggrav deplored the fact that a joint Communion service will not be held at Evanston. He proposed such a service at last year's meeting of the WCC's Executive Committee, but received little support.

The program of the Assembly lists five services of Holy Communion, to be held according to the Methodist rite on August 22; Anglican, August 23; Lutheran, August 24; Orthodox, August 25; and Church of South India, August 29.

In New York, a World Council official said that only the Orthodox service will be completely closed. The Methodist and Church of South India services will be open to all delegates who wish to participate, the Anglican service to "baptized, communicant members" of the WCC's member bodies, and the Lutheran service to "all who believe in His actual presence and that we receive His true body and blood in this sacrament."

In effect, according to the Council spokesman, this means that for the first time at the Assembly, services of Holy Communion will be open.

In his article, Bishop Berggrav said that the strongest opponents of a joint Communion service are the Orthodox Church members of the World Council, and that "we had better take the step without them."

(Considerable opposition has also been expressed from time to time in Lutheran and Anglican circles.)

The Norwegian leader stressed that it is Christ Himself who is "the host" at the Communion table, not the different Churches. According to Luther, he observed, the person officiating is of less importance, "it is the gift and the Word itself which is decisive and central."

Author In This Issue

Benjamin E. Mays is President of Morehouse College, Atlanta, Georgia, and a member of the Commission on the Church Amid Racial and Ethnic Tensions of the World Council of Churches.

Correction

Stewart W. Herman, author of "Twenty Years of Barmen" (CHRISTIANITY AND CRISIS, July 12), was incorrectly identified in the last issue. He is Executive Secretary of the Division of Lutheran Cooperation in Latin America of the National Lutheran Council.